

Appendix K. Public Comments and Service Responses

In this appendix the Service responds to comments that were received on the Keālia Pond NWR Draft CCP/EA, August 2011) during the official public comment period from August 19-September 19, 2011. Comments were received via letter, comment card, and e-mail. All substantial comments regarding the Draft CCP/EA are presented below. Some comments have had formatting changes and other minor edits to correct spelling or punctuation, but the majority of comments are as received. Service responses indicate where changes were made to the CCP based on specific comments.

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Comments and Responses

1. Claud Sutcliff, Ph.D.

Comment:

I have read the draft CCP and love the Vision (and that it is in Hawaiian first) and preferred alternative for Kakahai'a, but understand the realities you face financially, particularly if Fish and Wildlife succeeds in getting stewardship for Molokini (which sounds like a good idea). For the record, I very much would like to see USFW get the funding necessary to implement the preferred alternative for Kakahai'a! p. 3-1 (and the pages that follow) says that Wailau is the East Moloka'i volcano; that's wrong, Kamakou is the volcano, and Wailau is the main valley on the north shore...

Service Response:

We appreciate the support expressed by these comments. While there is also a "Wailau Valley" on this shield volcano, the entire East Moloka'i volcano is named "Wailau," according to the U.S. Geological Survey (Fields et al. 2008). The place name "Kamakou" is officially designated as the summit of Wailau, the highest peak on the southern rim. Please see the following references:

Feature Detail Report for: Kamakou [<http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic>]

Field, Michael E., Cochran, Susan A., Logan, Joshua B., and Storlazzi, Curt D., 2008, The south Moloka'i reef; origin, history and status, U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2007-5101, p. 3-10 [http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2007/5101/sir2007-5101_intro.pdf]

Comment:

p. 3-10 says that Moloka‘i "was first settled in approximately 600 BCE;" some families may claim that (and it may even be right), but the earliest date I've ever read in the archeological literature says 450 CE...

Service Response:

We apologize for the typographical error in the Draft CCP/EA. It should have read "600 CE." The text has been revised to "...450-650 CE."

2. Gene Anderson

Comment:

Prefers Alternative C and suggests adding Pueo to species list.

Service Response:

We appreciate the support expressed for our preferred alternative. Pueo has been added to our species list.

3. Arleone Dibben-Young

Comment:

Pg 2-17 Correct the use of ‘okina for ‘Alae ke‘oke‘o

Pg 5-1 Yuen family, not Ewing.

Pg 6-7 Estioko-Griffin (1987) reference is missing from Literature Cited

The commenter also provided substantial historical information on the area.

Service Response:

Thank you, typographical corrections have been made. Preliminary investigation of the cultural history of the Kakahai‘a NWR area will be verified and augmented in a formal archaeological and cultural investigation.

Comment:

Regarding Alternative C as proposed, I ask that reconfiguring the pond to its pre-1900 shape and size be investigated, not only to increase year round habitat, but to reduce refuge operation costs (pumping = costly electricity), perhaps thereby freeing funds for a full-time on-island refuge staff. The current practice of managing the water levels of the existing two pond system is to pump water year round from the well *into* the impoundments. In this way, the water levels can be managed when necessary, such as during an avian botulism outbreak or to kill vegetation that has regenerated when the ponds have dried by flooding. Water level management, however, could also be done by pumping water *out*, when required, to an upland containment pond. Re-exposing the fresh water lens floating atop the water table would provide year round habitat, and although a botulism outbreak can occur with permanently open water, an outbreak could be managed quickly by carcass salvage and without altering the water level.

Service Response:

The Refuge plans to collect as much data (soils, water resources, etc.) as possible to evaluate and design the restoration plan. These data will identify the feasibility of retaining the existing pond configurations.

Comment:

Although there is the Moloka‘i Human Society on island, their policy is to spay/neuter/release feral cats. I suggest a written agreement with the MHS to euthanize predators captured at the refuge or to dispatch any such predators on premises.

Service Response:

Feral animals will be euthanized upon capture on the Refuge. As identified in this CCP, establishing fences to reduce predators (including cats) will be a critical management strategy.

4. Bill Feeter

Comment:

It is not coordinated with other agencies to the fullest and is not holistically planned. Since there is no hope for funding I suggest that the USFWS consider private enterprise to operate the reserve.

Service Response:

*In section 2.3.2 **Interagency Coordination and Collaboration** we highlighted ecosystem planning efforts involve collaboration among Federal, State, and local agencies. We recognize that implementation of some strategies in the plan will require this same type of broad collaboration with others. We have revised this section to acknowledge that we will strive to collaborate with other public and private organizations, as appropriate, to achieve the goals identified in the plan.*

5. Skippy Hau

Comment:

I support Alternative C. 5-4. I strongly support maintaining shoreline access to fish and picnic. Involving the local community in implementing the proposed plan could be a win-win situation. I suggest the predator-proof fencing and its effectiveness in reducing predation could help with educating the public. I suggest stressing that visitors will be made up of local classes, teachers, and students.

Service Response:

More detailed information on interpretation, EE, and target groups will be included in the VSP. Chapter 5 has language regarding interpretation, EE, volunteering, and other opportunities for island residents.

Comment:

Having clear guidelines for flash photography and video cameras would be helpful to explain why we prohibit them during turtle nest excavations and their distraction for emerging hatchlings.

Service Response:

There is no documented evidence of turtles nesting along the Refuge shoreline but if there should be, we would develop guidelines to minimize impacts to adult nesting females and hatchlings at that time.

5. Ken Fiske

Comment:

This bird list, along with the latter one, includes birds not found on Darlene Fiske’s bird survey. I was surprised to see the area along the beach now included as part of the Refuge. Thus, different birds not found within the Refuge are included. At one time, site was home to moorhens and they need to be reintroduced.

Service Response:

The Appendix A Species List is a compilation of species found on the Refuge at various times by multiple individuals, dating back to 1981. As such, it is likely to include more species than those identified by any one individual.

The coastal area was included with the acquisition in 1976 and has always been part of the Refuge. The direction of this first 15 year plan is to restore the wetlands. Once restored and managed, moorhens can be evaluated for repatriation to the Refuge – if they don’t voluntarily return. This would likely be included in the next 15-year plan.

Comment:

Alternate C is the best plan. Forest habitat should be all native trees.

Service Response:

All native species would be ideal; however, restoration of the wetlands is a priority. The forest habitat is essential for protecting the wetland from sedimentation from the upper watershed. The Refuge will strategically plan the replacement of the invasive pest species with native species while preparing the wetland restoration plan and ensure impacts to the wetlands are not exacerbated.

Comment:

Restoration of wetland is of first importance, along with a need for permanent staff presence on the site. There is a need to involve the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Moloka‘i-Lana‘i Soil and Water Conservation District, which can address the alternate components not within the scope of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Service Response:

*An onsite employee is a need identified in the preferred alternative, Alt. C., and similar to other strategies, is dependent upon future funding. Both agencies identified by the commenter are partners within the East Moloka‘i Watershed Committee and the Sedimentation Committee, partners have been identified in 2.2.2 **Interagency Coordination and Collaboration.***

Comment:

Information from the airport does not transpose to the Refuge.

Service Response:

The weather data from the airport is of importance even though the distance is away from the Refuge. The weather station at the airport is the closest monitoring system and we need to know how it differs from the Refuge. This information will remain in the final CCP as a future reference. The Refuge used to have a weather station and it will need to be reinstalled as the wetlands are restored.

Comment:

Herbicides were once applied to the bulrush and were ineffective. Any pesticide application should have assurance of working and a label which will not endanger the birds for which the Refuge is being created.

Service Response:

The Refuge is cognizant of label restrictions and proper applications. The plan is to remove California bulrush as completely as possible. Herbicides would be used to hold back and prevent re-establishment of invasive pest species.

